

BENJAMIN SCHLIESSER

# Abraham's Faith in Romans 4

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# Abraham's Faith in Romans 4

Paul's Concept of Faith  
in Light of the History  
of Reception of Genesis 15:6

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comes real in the existence of the individual believer.<sup>407</sup> R.B. Hays, who refers to Schlier's statement, argues that "[t]his interpretation ... seems contrived; could Paul have expected his readers to make such a distinction between *Heilsprinzip* and *Glaubensakt*?"<sup>408</sup> Yet, instead of two different meanings of πίστις ("principle" and act), Hays has to assert two different meanings (faithfulness and faith) and two different subjects (Christ and the believer). Which exegesis is more contrived?

Gal 2:16 places before us a similar combination of noun and verb, which again is no "wooden redundancy,"<sup>409</sup> but the differentiation between πίστις as general order of salvation and πιστεύειν as concretization.<sup>410</sup>

e) "Christ-Faith" and "God-Righteousness"

It is noteworthy that already Augustine in his comments on Rom 3:22 finds a connection between the phrases πίστις Χριστοῦ and δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, arguing that just as Paul did not mean the faith with which Christ himself believes, he also did not mean the righteousness whereby God is himself righteous.<sup>411</sup> As is obvious, both statements are challenged by many modern commentators, but at least his insight regarding their correlation proves valuable. Neither phrase can be explained without the other.

The proponents of the subjective understanding claim that the human act of believing in Jesus Christ cannot be, in Paul's view, the reason for God's manifestation of his righteousness – rather, an act of God is required.<sup>412</sup>

First of all, this critique presupposes that πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ refers to the revelation of God's righteousness<sup>413</sup> rather than to δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ itself.<sup>414</sup> Considering our interpretation of 1:17 this understanding appears to be correct.<sup>415</sup> But the actual problematic issue lies in the critique's presupposition of a particular concept of faith – possibly derived from a (mis)reading of R. Bultmann – that regards the divine righteousness as

<sup>407</sup> Thus, the relationship of the prepositions διὰ and εἰς is parallel to the one discovered for ἐκ and εἰς in Rom 1:17 (cf. A. Schlatter 1935, 140).

<sup>408</sup> R.B. Hays 1983, 142n.80.

<sup>409</sup> L.E. Keck 1989, 545; cf. S.K. Williams 1980, 273f.

<sup>410</sup> Cf. similarly G. Friedrich 1981, 104.

<sup>411</sup> Augustine, *De Spiritu et Littera* 9,15 (referred to in R.B. Hays 2002, 1).

<sup>412</sup> Cf. R.B. Hays 1983, 159; 1997, 283; see however, slightly modified, 297: "[W]e receive the promise through [both], Christ's faithfulness ... [and] through our faith." M. Neubrand 1997, 118; D.A. Campbell 2005, 197: "The key point is simply this: human 'faith' cannot function instrumentally within a process of divine disclosure" (italics original). H.-S. Choi 2005, 471.

<sup>413</sup> Cf., e.g., O. Kuss 1957, 113, and, by implication, those who offer the critique against the objective understanding.

<sup>414</sup> Cf., e.g., U. Luz 1968, 170n.130; U. Wilckens 1978, 187.

<sup>415</sup> See above pages 244f.

incompatible with an individualized act of believing. It is argued that there cannot be a one-way causal connection between a human and a divine act. One criticizes the more common interpretation of 3:22, according to which through our faith God's righteousness becomes effective,<sup>416</sup> comes to expression,<sup>417</sup> imparts itself,<sup>418</sup> or is bestowed to us as a gift.<sup>419</sup> In any case, the *particula veri* of this objection lies in the fact that due to the argumentative connection between 3:21 and 3:22, one has to account appropriately for the context's "apocalyptic" horizon, in particular the verb *πεφανερωται*, which is the implicit predicate of 3:22 as well.<sup>420</sup>

In order to navigate between these two mutually exclusive views and in order find a common ground that could accomplish the synchronization of their intentions (not results), we have to take into account some disputed scholarly perspectives on the expression *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ* and steer from there to a redefinition of Paul's concept of faith. Mainly based on Phil 3:9, R. Bultmann and H. Conzelmann interpret "God's righteousness"<sup>421</sup> anthropologically in terms of its gift-character, as righteousness transferred to the "isolated" individual through faith – as "my righteousness."<sup>422</sup> In consequence and in like manner, faith is understood as radical individualization and isolation – as "my faith."<sup>423</sup>

With A. Schlatter's work as a decisive impulse,<sup>424</sup> E. Käsemann and P. Stuhlmacher have sought to describe "God's righteousness" in terms of its power-character, as righteousness with eschatological-soteriological force. Paul's theology and idea of history is not oriented toward the individual,<sup>425</sup>

<sup>416</sup> Cf. U. Luz 1968, 170; U. Wilckens 1978, 187; M. Theobald 1992, 97.

<sup>417</sup> Cf. J.D.G. Dunn 1988, 167.

<sup>418</sup> Cf. P. Stuhlmacher 1966, 87.

<sup>419</sup> Cf. O. Michel 1978, 148.

<sup>420</sup> Cf. W. Schenk 1972, 170. His essay makes the attempt of a "Verhältnisbestimmung" of "God-righteousness" and "Christ-faith" (see above chapter II.F.IV).

<sup>421</sup> On an extensive history of scholarship on this topic, see M.A. Seifrid 1992, 1-75 (cf. 2000). Also G. Klein 1967; M.T. Brauch 1977.

<sup>422</sup> Cf. R. Bultmann 1958, 280f.; H. Conzelmann 1967, 243. See also G. Klein 1967, 235f.; H.-W. Bartsch 1968, 49n.10.

<sup>423</sup> Cf. R. Bultmann 1954, 102: "Die entscheidende Geschichte ist nicht die Weltgeschichte, die Geschichte Israels und der anderen Völker, sondern die Geschichte, die jeder Einzelne selbst erfährt." 1959, 219; G. Klein 1967, 235; H. Conzelmann 1967, 193 ("radikale Individualisierung"), 243: "Der Glaube führt in die Vereinzelung." – Contrast the deliberations in K. Barth 1960, 844-846 on the individualism and subjectivity of faith ("Ich-Glaube"); the "I" has to be demythologized (846). Also S. Kierkegaard speaks of the "absolute isolation" of the believer: "Der Glaubensritter" Abraham, whose faith is about to be tested, "hat einzig und allein sich selber." But he goes on: "[D]arin liegt das Furchtbare" (quoted in M. Buber 1952, 591).

<sup>424</sup> Cf. A. Schlatter 1935, 36 (God's righteousness as act of God; God as creator).

<sup>425</sup> E. Käsemann 1961, 188. See also Bultmann's reaction to Käsemann (1964).

so that when he speaks of righteousness he has in mind a powerful word-event with eschatological implications and the idea of creation.<sup>426</sup> Correspondingly, in critique of an individualistic limitation of "faith," H. Binder offered an alternative that elevates the event of faith beyond any subjectivity.<sup>427</sup>

With regard to neither of the terms, δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ and πίστις Χριστοῦ, is a polarization towards either "anthropological-individual" or "eschatological-cosmic" helpful.<sup>428</sup> It is crucial that in each case both poles are addressed and considered as two components of a unity.<sup>429</sup>

Nevertheless, Paul's "Christian" language knows neither an individualizing, isolating "my righteousness"<sup>430</sup> nor an individualizing, isolating "my faith,"<sup>431</sup> for righteousness belongs to God, and faith belongs to Christ. But

<sup>426</sup> P. Stuhlmacher 1966, 98, 236. See also C. Müller 1964.

<sup>427</sup> See above chapter II.F.III. Stuhlmacher's description of faith as "überindividuelle[s] Gesamtphänomen" (1966, 81) has been attacked from two sides, from both H. Binder (1968, 57n.17) and E. Käsemann (1980, 20).

<sup>428</sup> Cf., e.g., P. Stuhlmacher 1966, 81 (but see 42); E. Käsemann 1980, 20 (on σωτηρία): "Universalismus und äußerste Individuation sind hier Kehrseiten desselben Sachverhaltes." 30 (on Rom 1:18-3:20): "Die Spannung von Kosmologie und Anthropologie charakterisiert paulinische Theologie im ganzen." To be sure, Käsemann does not apply his insight to Paul's concept of πίστις Χριστοῦ (cf. 20), even though he notices the structure power – gift in principally all genitival phrases that speak of eschatological gifts (26). – O. Cullmann, too, does not perceive a tension between the Christian existence and *Heilsgeschichte* (1965, vi).

<sup>429</sup> The bipolar structure of both righteousness and faith makes the dispute between E. Käsemann and G. Bornkamm and their pupils (P. Stuhlmacher and F. Hahn/E. Brandenburger) appear in a new light. Bornkamm criticized (1969, 156) that the unique Pauline correlation between righteousness and faith is put into the background in an awkward manner due to Käsemann's emphasis on the power-character of God's righteousness (see Käsemann's response in 1969a, 139; also Stuhlmacher 1970, 178f.n.28). If one concedes that universalism and individuation are two sides of both δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ and πίστις Χριστοῦ, then both correspond harmoniously.

<sup>430</sup> Notably, the phrase ἡ ἐμὴ δικαιοσύνη (Phil 3:9) refers to the time before his call.

<sup>431</sup> Paul never uses the form πιστεύω and only occasionally first and second person plural or third person plural (only with regard to Abraham). In nominal constructions, Paul refers to Abraham's faith three times (Rom 4:5.12.16); once he writes πίστις ὑμῶν τε καὶ ἐμοῦ (1:12), once ἡ πίστις σου (sc. Philemon's) (Phlm 6), while the expression ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν is more frequent (Rom 1:8.12; 1Cor 2:5; 15:14.17; 2Cor 1:24; 10:15; Phil 2:17; 1Thess 1:8; 3:2.5.6.7.10). In Rom 14:22, πίστις comes close to the meaning "conviction" (cf., e.g., K. Haacker 1999, 290). – While H. Binder has to explain away these passages in order to come to his "non-anthropocentric" conclusions on the Pauline faith (1968, 69), K. Barth offers a comparatively brief, polemical paragraph at the end of his doctrine of reconciliation (1960, 826-872), which is supposed to counter the "Unbescheidenheit" and "Wichtigtuerei" of the Christian individual (828; some call Barth's chapter listless [cf. D. Lührmann 1976, 15; 1992, 18; W. Schenk 1982, 69] and feel forced to give a sharp response [G. Ebeling 1958, 65n.1], but the provocation is some-

ing death.<sup>486</sup> Its core appears to be an undisputed reality, for the (Jewish-Christian) circles in which this text unit presumably originated, for Paul, who incorporated it into his letter, as well as for the recipients of the letter.

Nevertheless, to the modern reader, the section Rom 3:24-26 poses several questions that concern predominantly tradition-historical and redactional aspects, and these questions have received even more different interpretations. Many exegetes agree that the compact style<sup>487</sup> and for Paul unusual terminology<sup>488</sup> suggest that in 3:(24.)25-26 Paul took up and commented on a traditional Jewish-Christian soteriological formula – possibly a baptismal text.<sup>489</sup> The exact extent and form of what Paul adopted is disputed, but this issue does not need to be discussed here extensively.<sup>490</sup> Most of these exegetes understand the expression διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως to be inserted by Paul into this traditional text piece<sup>491</sup> and the second ἔνδειξις phrase (3:26b) as an explanatory addition to the first occurrence of ἔνδειξις in 3:25.<sup>492</sup> Hence, in sum, the text used and supplemented by Paul reaches from 3:25 until 3:26a.<sup>493</sup> In the course of the exegesis of this passage, we

<sup>486</sup> Cf. M. Neubrand 1997, 117. Only from Rom 3:27 onwards does he resume the argumentative style.

<sup>487</sup> Cf. already M. Luther 1515/1516, 238: "Textus obscurus et confusus."

<sup>488</sup> Cf. the unique meaning of προτίθεσθαι (different from Rom 1:13) and the *hapaxlegomena* ἱλαστήριον, πάρεσις, and προγίνεσθαι. The theme of "the blood of Christ" only appears in the context of the Lord's Supper (1Cor 10:16; 11:25) and in Rom 5:9 which however refers back to 3:25.

<sup>489</sup> Cf. especially U. Schnelle 1986, 67-72, 197-201. Alternatively, O. Michel (1978, 153n.16) and E. Käsemann (1980, 94) suggested the liturgy of the Lord's Supper as *Sitz im Leben* of Paul's *Vorlage*. In any case, one is left with some uncertainty (E. Lohse 2003, 133n.18).

<sup>490</sup> On the different solutions see especially P. Stuhlmacher 1975; cf. also R. Bultmann 1958, 49. Against E. Käsemann's proposal that the traditional text starts with Rom 3:24 (1950/1951; cf., e.g., K. Kertelge 1971, 48-53; D. Lührmann 1965, 150), K. Wengst contended that the progression of syntax from 3:23 to 3:24 is nothing unusual in Paul (1972, 87; cf., e.g., U. Wilckens 1978, 183f.; M. Theobald 1992, 99).

<sup>491</sup> Following R. Bultmann (cf. 1958, 49), E. Käsemann argues that Paul added the expression διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως, since it appears forced and disruptive (1950/1951, 100: "höchst gewaltsam und störend"; cf. U. Wilckens 1978: "gewaltsame paulinische Einfügung"). Notably, the Alexandrinus (A) lacks the expression διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως. See B.F. Meyer 1983 for further details, but also A. Pluta 1969, 36f., 45-56; S.K. Williams 1975, 41-51.

<sup>492</sup> Thus, through πρὸς τὴν ἔνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ Paul explains εἰς ἔνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ (3:25) to balance and broaden the gist of what he took over (cf. J.D.G. Dunn 1988, 164). Among those who defend Pauline authorship of these verses are O. Kuss 1963, 160; C.E.B. Cranfield 1975, 200f.; H. Schlier 1977, 107. Others want to identify Rom 3:24-26 as "non-Pauline fragment," i.e., post-Pauline gloss (C.H. Talbert 1966).

<sup>493</sup> Cf. P. Stuhlmacher 1975, 134.

have to take into account the relationship of Paul's interpretation to the existing tradition.

(a) *Ἰλαστήριον*

But at first we have to deal with the much discussed tradition-historical and history-of-religions background of the term Ἰλαστήριον, as well as with its meaning and implication in the present context. Apart from Rom 3:25, Ἰλαστήριον only appears in Heb 9:5 in the New Testament, but it is the common translation word for the Hebrew כִּי־סִפִּי in the Septuagint.<sup>494</sup> In the Old Testament כִּי־סִפִּי denotes the "mercy seat," the "place of expiation" on the Ark of the Covenant, on which a blood rite was carried out at the Day of Atonement.

The debate concerns the question whether Paul takes recourse to a later Jewish line of tradition that interprets the martyr death with the term Ἰλαστήριον in the framework of the idea of atonement (especially 4Macc 17,20-22<sup>495</sup>) or whether he rather identifies Jesus with the "atonement cover" and alludes to the Day of Atonement (especially Leviticus 16; cf. Ezekiel 43<sup>496</sup>). It is mainly E. Lohse's work on the martyr-idea in Jewish theology that is linked to the first interpretation and that gained great influence in New Testament scholarship.<sup>497</sup> On the other hand, P. Stuhlmacher's step-by-step critique of Lohse's arguments brings to the fore weaknesses in his method and line of thought.<sup>498</sup>

<sup>494</sup> Cf. P. Stuhlmacher 1975, 121. – On Ἰλαστήριον, see S. Schreiber 2006, discussing *inter alia* recent works of M. Gaukesbrink, T. Knöppler, D. Stökl Ben Ezra, and T. Söding.

<sup>495</sup> See the analysis of this idea in W. Kraus 1991, 33-44 (on 2Macc 7,37-38; LXX Dan 3:40; 4Macc 6,28-29; 17,21-22).

<sup>496</sup> These two chapters are also broadly discussed in W. Kraus 1991, 45-59, 59-63.

<sup>497</sup> Apart from the exegetes mentioned in P. Stuhlmacher 1975, 120 – H. Conzelmann, W. Schrage, K. Wengst, G. Delling, G. Klein, E. Schweizer, U. Wilckens (who later modified his view), and G. Eichholz (at first also P. Stuhlmacher himself; cf. 1966, 86f.) – see, e.g., S.K. Williams 1975, 47-51; R.B. Hays 1983, 160; J.W. van Henten 1993; K. Haacker 1999, 90f. Lohse has to conjecture that Paul had as *Vorlage* Ἰλαστήριον θύμα (adjective), which he changed into Ἰλαστήριον διὰ πίστεως (noun). This hypothesis emerges on grounds of the following observations: (1) the typological identification of Jesus and the "atonement cover" is not understandable for non-Jewish-Christian readers (E. Lohse 1963, 151); (2) the article is missing (in contrast to the use in the Septuagint) (151); (3) the public installing of Jesus contradicts the place of the ark in the *sanctum sanctorum* (151); (4) the image that Jesus stands for the כִּי־סִפִּי, onto which his blood is dashed at the same time, appears incomprehensible. See also E. Lohse 2003, 134f.

<sup>498</sup> Cf. P. Stuhlmacher 1975; 1989, 55-58, and following him more or less: U. Wilckens 1978, 190-194; M. Theobald 1992, 99f.; W. Kraus 1991, 152-154; 1999; D.P. Bailey 1999. Against the points of Lohse, Stuhlmacher argues: (1) later writings (1Peter; 1Clement; Hermas) confirm that the Roman congregation must have been capable of understanding the meaning of the Jewish-Christian paradox, especially if one considers the significance of the atonement and the Day of Atonement in post-exilic Jewish theolo-

As an alternative to a linear tradition-historical trajectory, others understand ἱλαστήριον in Rom 3:25 as "dedication of the eschatological sanctuary,"<sup>499</sup> or, in a wide, general sense as "means of atonement,"<sup>500</sup> or, still weaker as salvation-giving presence of God.<sup>501</sup>

In evaluation, both Lohse's and Stuhlmacher's explanations<sup>502</sup> seek to and are able to account for the notion of αἵμα, which in Paul refers to Jesus' death on the cross<sup>503</sup> – for Lohse it is associated with the self-sacrifice of the martyrs, for Stuhlmacher with the sin offering. Yet only the reference to Leviticus 16 can do justice to (1) to the fact that it is God himself who provides for the atoning means (cf. Lev 17:11)<sup>504</sup>; (2) the singularity of God's atoning act in Christ; (3) to its unrepeatable "once and for all"-character; and (4) to the Jewish-Christian origin of the text in conjunction with Paul's concern that what he asserts is sanctioned by the law and the prophets (Rom 3:21). As will be seen later, the atonement also establishes a link to the context of 4:3-8 and 4:25.

The language is metaphorical-typological. But what are the implications of this language<sup>505</sup> in the present context? Some see in these phrases the

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gizing (1975, 124); (2) the noun ἱλαστήριον is used as a *praedicativum* and therefore does not require an article (125); (3) and (4) the highly complex and abstract idea of the theology of the ark – the ark was no longer present in the second temple – does not allow for demanding direct equivalences. As in Rom 3:25 where both the "atonement cover" and the blood are referred to Jesus, in Hebrews Jesus is portrayed as both sacrifice and high priest (127). – Furthermore, the date of composition of 4Maccabees might well be later than Paul's letters. See also the concerns against 4Macc 17,20-21 as background for Rom 3:25 in W. Kraus 1991, 39-41, 151f.

<sup>499</sup> W. Kraus develops and critiques insights of Stuhlmacher (1991, 152-154, 194-199), concluding: "Jesus [wurde] in seinem Kreuzestod von Gott als eschatologisches Heiligtum eingesetzt," and this sanctuary is the place of atonement and divine epiphany (1991, 163).

<sup>500</sup> Cf. H. Lietzmann 1928, 49f.; U. Schnelle 2003, 509.

<sup>501</sup> Cf. G. Wiencke 1939, 52; also D.A. Campbell 1992, 113; M. Neubrand 1997, 121.

<sup>502</sup> J.D.G. Dunn argues against a "clear-cut either/or" (1988, 171), but goes on that "it is more likely that 4Macc 17.21-22 ... and Rom 3:25 are parallel extensions of the same cultic language" (180).

<sup>503</sup> According to Lev 17:11-12, the blood is the medium provided by Yahweh through which cultic atonement is performed. The notion of "blood" speaks against a connection to Hellenistic gifts of atonement (cf. U. Wilckens 1978, 192, against A. Deißmann 1903; S. Schreiber seeks to revive Deißmann's interpretation [2006,100-102]).

<sup>504</sup> This idea differs greatly from the idea of the atoning blood of the martyrs (cf. P. Stuhlmacher 1975, 131n.57).

<sup>505</sup> Even in Second Temple Judaism the mention of the "mercy seat" had metaphorical meaning, since the physical ark was no longer present (cf. P. Stuhlmacher 1975, 127). On the other hand the language is typological, insofar as it describes the relative identity of the effects of the ἱλαστήριον, both of the Old and New Testament, namely, the forgiveness of sins.



what happens, as he prepares in Jesus Christ the means of salvation and of the forgiveness of sins.<sup>513</sup>

The next question that poses itself concerns the group of people, who are – in Paul's view – affected by the consequences of Jesus' atoning death, i.e., who are absorbed in this new reality. Does Paul attain a collective, universal perspective or does he distinguish between Jews and Gentiles<sup>514</sup>? Those who argue that Paul has in mind Gentile sin and atonement of Gentile sin<sup>515</sup> fail to account for Jewish-Christian provenance of the text piece, which in its original certainly spoke of the Jewish people, but more importantly they neglect the generic and universal statement: "There is no distinction, since all have sinned" (3:22-23).<sup>516</sup>

In sum, with his inclusion of the traditional, Jewish-Christian formula into the context of chapter 3, Paul takes up the basic thrust of this paradox (proving that he deems equally valid a Christology with a different outlook than his own): By putting forward Jesus as ἱλαστήριον, God constitutes a holy, new, eschatological people and thus fully realizes and transcends what was anticipated in the sacrifice described in Leviticus 16.<sup>517</sup> In his righteousness, he is faithful to his covenant, renewing and fulfilling the relationship to his people.<sup>518</sup> As already indicated, Paul now gives to it his own impressive theological twist and extends it by means of two aspects<sup>519</sup>: first, the universal-eschatological reality of God's salvation, and second the notion of faith as universal means of salvation. To the latter we now turn.<sup>520</sup>

(b) Διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως

Above, the unexpected insertion of διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως has been highlighted, and it deserves some consideration. Already in his *propositio* Paul had shown that "faith" would constitute the cornerstone of his letter and made his reader/hearer aware that his crucial theses have to be appreciated from

<sup>513</sup> Cf. the remarkable way how God is named the subject of reconciliation as 2Cor 5:19: "In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them."

<sup>514</sup> See above the distinction between proponents of an exclusive soteriology (chapter V.A.I.2.a) and those of a non-exclusive soteriology (chapter V.A.I.2.b).

<sup>515</sup> Cf. S.K. Williams 1975, 25-34; J.G. Gager 1985, 216; S.K. Stowers 1989, 668-670; M. Neubrand 1997, 122.

<sup>516</sup> Cf. J.D.G. Dunn 1988, 173. Paul's view is different from that of 2Macc 6,12-16.

<sup>517</sup> This tenet is related to the words of the Lord's Supper, especially to 1Cor 11:25; Lk 22:20.

<sup>518</sup> Cf. P. Stuhlmacher 1975, 132; G. Eichholz 1972, 194.

<sup>519</sup> While G. Klein sees in Paul's use of the formula a critique of the original paradox (1967, 6n.12), P. Stuhlmacher regards it as consequent development and extension (1975, 133).

<sup>520</sup> Cf. P. Stuhlmacher 1975, 133.

the perspective of faith.<sup>521</sup> This is also the case here; otherwise the insertion would remain mysterious.

Notably, a similar addition to a traditional formula occurs in Gal 3:26: Right after talking about the new era of faith that had come with Christ, Paul asserts that "in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith (διὰ τῆς πίστεως)."<sup>522</sup> Two ideas already familiar to us, the keyword *πᾶς* and the maxim that there is no distinction between Jews and Gentiles (Gal 3:28), prove the apostle's universal structure of thought in this context and anticipate the course of the exegesis of Rom 3:25.

At least three different interpretations found their way into the exegetical discussion: The expression is held to denote either God's covenantal faithfulness, or Jesus' faithfulness, or, traditionally, human faith (in Christ).

(1) The first view<sup>523</sup> seems "attractive"<sup>524</sup> and finds support through contextual arguments and through references to corresponding passages both in the Septuagint and the New Testament. In the immediate context of Rom 3:25, i.e., in 3:22 and 26, *πίστις* is determined by a genitive; the lack of such a determination in 3:25 might indicate that the syntactical subject – ὁ θεός – is the point of reference of *πίστις*, as in Rom 3:3. Furthermore, several Septuagintal passages understand *πίστις* in terms of God's faithfulness,<sup>525</sup> and Deut 32:4 displays a juxtaposition of God's faithfulness and his righteousness in analogy to Rom 3:25.<sup>526</sup> One reason against this solution is the required assumption of different meanings and subjects of *πίστις* in the context of 3:21–26.<sup>527</sup> More importantly, however, with διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως Paul recurs without doubt to the longer expression διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (3:22) and abbreviates it according to the formula style.<sup>528</sup>

(2) Once the relationship between 3:22 and 3:25 in the present Pauline context is acknowledged,<sup>529</sup> the decisive general question is again which

<sup>521</sup> See above pages 241f.

<sup>522</sup> On the secondary character of διὰ τῆς πίστεως, see, e.g., H. Schlier 1965, 171; H.D. Betz 1979, 181; R.B. Hays 1983, 155.

<sup>523</sup> Cf. K. Barth 1922, 86; G. Hebert 1955, 376, and most extensively A. Pluta 1969, 45–56, 105–111.

<sup>524</sup> J.D.G. Dunn 1988, 172; cf. 1997, 266: Possibly, διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως refers to God's faithfulness in analogy to the ἐκ πίστεως of Rom 1:17.

<sup>525</sup> Cf. A. Pluta 1969, 51n.17., who refers to 18 passages in the Septuagint.

<sup>526</sup> Besides, 1John 1:9 contains a similar correlation, even in the framework of the atonement.

<sup>527</sup> Cf. U. Wilckens 1978, 194; W. Kraus 1991, 187 with n.150.

<sup>528</sup> If one insists that διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως belonged to the original formula (thus A. Pluta 1969, 45–56), one has to recognize that the meaning differs between the original (πίστις θεοῦ) and Paul's use (πίστις Χριστοῦ) (cf. U. Wilckens 1978, 194).

<sup>529</sup> Cf., e.g., W. Schenk 1972, 171; G. Eichholz 1972, 191; U. Wilckens 1978, 193.

salvific activity, embodied in the crucified, is experienced and accepted in terms of its relevance *pro me*.<sup>534</sup> This view, however, has to paraphrase and explain with some artistry the instrumental preposition διὰ: Atonement “comes through faith,”<sup>535</sup> is “to be appropriated by faith,”<sup>536</sup> “grasped through faith,”<sup>537</sup> “effective through faith,”<sup>538</sup> “available through faith,”<sup>539</sup> or simply “for faith.”<sup>540</sup> More importantly, as in 3:22 this interpretation that puts human acceptance adjacent to God’s salvific action appears to contradict the theocentric *ductus* of the text.<sup>541</sup> Also, the phrase διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως modifies the verb προτίθεσθαι,<sup>542</sup> just as ἐκ πίστεως refers to ἀποκαλύπτεται (1:17) and διὰ πίστεως το πεφανέρωται (3:21-22).

Consequently, διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως describes the means through which God publicly and universally established Christ as the means of atonement. Here, our personal faith is not the primary issue. The insertion of this phrase through Paul makes clear his intention: That God revealed his righteousness through faith is parallel to his manifestation of Christ as ἱλαστήριον to demonstrate his righteousness. Only an entity that correlates to these all-encompassing divine acts can explain Paul’s language: Faith is here a phenomenon that transcends human subjectivity, but has the power to bring about righteousness and atonement. The enigmatic term ἐνδειξίς therefore also connotes the eschatological manifestation of God’s righteousness through faith<sup>543</sup> – rather than taking on a rational, “evidential sense”<sup>544</sup> – and connects to πεφανέρωται (3:21).<sup>545</sup>

When Paul takes up the traditional wording in his own formulation by means of the term ἐνδειξίς (3:26), he makes fully clear that the eschatological revelation of righteousness through faith “now” (3:21) is the eschatological manifestation of his righteousness through faith, in Christ’s blood, “at the present time” (3:25-26). Notably, faith, righteousness, and Christology belong together for Paul: He included the traditional piece Rom 3:24-26 into the *locus classicus* of his doctrine of justification, 3:21-

<sup>534</sup> P. Stuhlmacher 1975, 134f.

<sup>535</sup> W. Kraus 1991, 187.

<sup>536</sup> C.E.B. Cranfield 1975, 201; cf. 210; similarly H. Lietzmann 1928, 48.

<sup>537</sup> E. Käsemann 1980, 85.

<sup>538</sup> The translation of the NRSV.

<sup>539</sup> S. Westerholm 2004, 322.

<sup>540</sup> M. Luther’s translation (“für den Glauben”). – Equally unconvincing, the second of the interpretations mentioned (the faithfulness of Christ) translates for instance “due to” (cf. S.K. Williams 1975, 51).

<sup>541</sup> Cf. U. Wilckens 1978, 193f. He, however, wants to distinguish human acceptance from human trust in Christ, which appears to be too subtle a distinction.

<sup>542</sup> Against F. Büchsel 1938, 321.

<sup>543</sup> Cf. P. Stuhlmacher 1966, 89.

<sup>544</sup> Against D.M. Hay 1989, 472. Cf. U. Wilckens 1978, 194.

<sup>545</sup> Cf. W.G. Kümmel 1952, 269.

Christ,<sup>554</sup> nor a human attitude, but the new reality that has been instigated upon his coming and has received a universal dimension through his death. The causal preposition ἐκ<sup>555</sup> points to the realm where one's existence has its ground and origin<sup>556</sup>: The one who is ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ is the one whose existence grounds in the new salvation-historical sphere of faith and participates in it.<sup>557</sup> The other, corresponding, but futile basis of one's existence is the law: Those who participate in the sphere of the law are called οἱ ἐκ νόμου (4:14)<sup>558</sup>; this analogy reinforces the radical contrast between both ways of salvation from the present eschatological perspective.

Considering the above definition of typology, one could argue for a typological correlation of "those of faith" and "those of the law"; their identity lies in the idea that both express the soil in which one's existence roots with respect to one's orientation to God. The remarkable singular ὁ ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ puts the emphasis on the personal involvement, which results from the fact that God's righteousness is disclosed universally through the event of faith and has come to and seized the individual believer (cf. 3:22; Phil 3:12).

Though δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ describes God's attribute of being righteous<sup>559</sup> manifesting itself in a universal-eschatological dimension in Christ's cross (δικαίος εἶναι), it becomes real and tangible in the subjective appropriation of the event of salvation when his righteousness is transferred as a gift to the individual existence (δικαιοῦσθαι).<sup>560</sup> There, elimination of sins and righteousness correlate. However, while Paul in this paragraph is still occupied primarily with the greater, salvation-historical framework, he will deal extensively with the aspect of the particularity of the individual existence only in the Abraham-chapter with a similar, but more "personal" correspondence of justification and forgiveness. Hence, even if the original *Sitz im Leben* of the Jewish-Christian paradosis might have been baptism, the present wideness of Paul's depiction of salvation-history only anticipates and prepares an individual concretization.<sup>561</sup>

<sup>554</sup> Cf. again K. Barth 1922, 86, who translates: "...in der Treue, die in Jesus sich bewährt." J.J. O'Rourke 1973, 190f.

<sup>555</sup> Cf. A. Schlatter 1935, 42.

<sup>556</sup> Cf. O. Michel 1978, 154. This is not to be understood though in existential-philosophical terms.

<sup>557</sup> Cf. Gal 3:7.9 (οἱ ἐκ πίστεως).

<sup>558</sup> See below page 370.

<sup>559</sup> Cf. U. Wilckens 1978, 195, but also C.E.B. Cranfield 1975, 211 (i.e., different from 1:17; 3:21-22; cf. 98, 202).

<sup>560</sup> Cf. U. Schnelle 2003, 251f.

<sup>561</sup> Cf. A. Schlatter 1935, 157. For Paul ὁ νῦν καιρός means the time after Christ has come – into the world, not into the life of the individual in baptism.

According to M. Neubrand, the structure of 3:27-31 follows the schema ABCB'A<sup>566</sup>:

A	Exclusion of boasting through νόμος πίστεως (3:27)
B	Righteousness through πίστις (3:28)
C	The one God of Jews and Gentiles (3:29)
B'	Righteousness through πίστις (3:30)
A'	Establishment of the νόμος through πίστις (3:31)

#### a) Boasting, Law, and Faith

Paul's long and broad exposition of the sinfulness and faithlessness of humankind (1:18-3:20) constitutes the background of 3:27. His generic judgment on the desperate human situation was: "Every mouth may be silenced, and the whole world may be held accountable to God" (3:19) and "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (3:23). Now, where is boasting? Boasting is once and for all excluded, locked out. The keyword καύχησις certainly refers back to the (Jewish) boasting (καυχᾶσθαι) condemned in 2:17 and 2:23.<sup>567</sup> But does it remain limited to the Jewish boasting or does Paul in this context open the horizon of his argument and speak in general-anthropological terms?

An extremely controversial aspect involved in this problem is the relationship between the Jewish understanding of (works of) the law and boasting. Oftentimes, it is argued that righteousness by works belongs intrinsically together with boasting, a view which culminated in the identification of boasting and original sin ("Ursünde") in R. Bultmann's hamartiology<sup>568</sup> and in the antithesis of "faith" and "boasting" in his view of Paul's understanding of faith.<sup>569</sup> Certainly, this perspective, rooted in an existential interpretation of Paul, did not remain without serious opposition, and others suggested a less radical view: The "boasting terminology ... is rather neutral; by itself it does not point to a morally perverse 'Selbstruhm'".<sup>570</sup> According to this view, which becomes increasingly

<sup>566</sup> Cf. M. Neubrand 1997, 127.

<sup>567</sup> In Rom 2:17.23 the verb καυχᾶσθαι occurs, and in 4:2 Paul will take up this concept with the noun καύχημα. According to J.A. Fitzmyer "there is no real distinction" between καύχημα and καύχησις (1993, 362).

<sup>568</sup> R. Bultmann 1949, 204. "Es gehört also zusammen die Gerechtigkeit aus den Werken und das Rühmen," which is nothing else than craving for recognition ("Geltungsbedürfnis") (1948, 151; italics original), "die sündig-eigenmächtige Haltung" (1958, 242). Though Bultmann is probably the most eminent representative of this view, he is followed by many others (see below pages 332f.).

<sup>569</sup> Cf. R. Bultmann 1958, 316 and the critique of F. Neugebauer 1961, 165.

<sup>570</sup> J. Lambrecht 1985, 28; cf. J. Lambrecht/R.W. Thompson 1988, 17; see most forcefully E.P. Sanders 1983, 32-36, but also H. Räisänen, 1987, 170f. – With many other

popular in Pauline scholarship, "boasting" rather denotes "Jewish ethnic pride in the Law"<sup>571</sup> or the "racial boast of the Jew."<sup>572</sup> Hence, Paul's critique is directed against *that* boasting that stands for Jewish pride in circumcision and the law, i.e., in Israel's particular election. In his critique of the one-sidedness of this (new) perspective, S.J. Gathercole adds the following, eschatological dimension to this national Jewish boast: *καύχησις* also denotes "confidence that God would vindicate Israel on the basis of both election and obedience, and that he would vindicate them both before and over against the gentiles."<sup>573</sup>

These explanations, however, seem to be deficient in some respects, whether or not one adds the eschatological factor to the Jewish racial boast, as they fall short of appreciating the universal-christological outlook of the apostle. For one thing, though the limitation of "boasting" to Jewish ethnic pride is backed by the occurrence of the notion of boasting in 2:17, a wider perspective nevertheless suggests itself on the basis of the eschatological scope implied by the particle *νυνί* in 3:21 and the general line of thought throughout the section 3:21-31. Furthermore, God is the one (*passivum divinum*) who has accomplished the exclusion of boasting "once for all,"<sup>574</sup> and he has done so as God of both Jews and Gentiles (3:29) for both Jews and Gentiles. Ultimately, Paul combines both, Jewish boasting and Gentile boasting and thus opposed the stance of *πᾶσα σάρξ*. Bultmann is not far off when he parallels "works of the law" and "boasting": Whenever Paul uses the generic expression *πᾶσα σάρξ* he has in mind either of the two categories, works of the law or boasting (Gal 2:16; Rom 3:20; 1Cor 1:29<sup>575</sup>). The difference concerning the way of thought between the Corinthians passage, 1Cor 1:29, and Rom 3:27 is that in Corinthians his primary perspective and starting point is Gentile wisdom, while in Romans

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exegetes, M. Neubrand points to positive references to boasting in Rom 5:2.3.11 and 15:17 and sees the reason of Paul's critique in 2:17.23 in the discrepancy of a boasting attitude and acts (1997, 129n.13).

<sup>571</sup> R.B. Hays 1996, 153.

<sup>572</sup> N.T. Wright 1997, 129. On the ethnic notion of boasting, see also H. Moxnes 1988, 71; K. Stendahl 1995, 24; M. Cranford 1995, 77.

<sup>573</sup> S.J. Gathercole 2002, 226 (in the original italicized); cf. 9 (taking into account insights of U. Wilckens and P. Stuhlmacher). As for the meaning of *καύχησις*, Gathercole determines it as "Israel's national boast" (225), though later he seems to widen the perspective of Paul's notion of "boasting" and speaks generically of "anthropological" (232).

<sup>574</sup> C.E.B. Cranfield 1975, 219, with reference to the tense of *ἐξεκλείσθη*. Cf. O. Michel 1978, 155. – H. Räisänen points to the link between *νυνί δέ* (Rom 3:21) and *ἐξεκλείσθη*: "Es ist am natürlichsten, daß *ἐξεκλείσθη* auf 'ein geschichtliches Ereignis' zurückweist" (1979/1980, 110).

<sup>575</sup> The exception is 1Cor 15:39, but its context is a different one.



he predominantly focuses on Jewish works.<sup>576</sup> Nevertheless, on both trains of thought he reaches a universally valid, theologically or rather christologically grounded, conclusion.<sup>577</sup> To what extent, however, Bultmann's anthropological-existential position requires qualifications we will discuss when dealing with Abraham's "boasting" in Rom 4:2.<sup>578</sup> For now, we will put the debate to rest.

For what reasons and on which grounds is boasting so decisively excluded? Again, Paul's answer poses several exegetical problems, with far-reaching implications for his understanding of the law. He says: Not<sup>579</sup> through the νόμος (τῶν) ἔργων, but through the νόμος πίστεως. Basically, there have been three solutions to the meaning of the two occurrences of the enigmatic νόμος in these phrases<sup>580</sup>: Either it denotes metaphorically in both cases "general principle," "order," "criterion," or "norm," as in many instances in ancient literature,<sup>581</sup> or it refers in both cases to the "law,"<sup>582</sup> or – as an intermediate solution – in the first instance the "law" is in view and in the second a principle in a general sense.<sup>583</sup> In a recent study on Rom 3:27, A. Ito demands a methodological distinction between rhetoric and theology, between the meaning(s) acquired by a "casual" reading and a "careful" reading, and thus contends: "It seems that those who take the νόμος πίστεως as referring to the Torah are after the Pauline theology, while those who take it in a general sense are more concerned with the

<sup>576</sup> Cf. A. Schlatter 1927, 388.

<sup>577</sup> That Rom 3:27 is meant in a general way is argued by, for instance, K. Barth 1922, 90f.; E. Käsemann 1980, 96f.; E. Gräßer 1998, 17n.78; apparently also C.E.B. Cranfield 1975, 165, 218f.

<sup>578</sup> See below chapter V.B.IV.4.a.(b).

<sup>579</sup> The particle οὐχί suggests that Paul counters an expected answer of his interlocutor, which might have been: Yes, boasting is excluded through the νόμος (τῶν) ἔργων since the required works are wanting (cf. J. Lambrecht 1985, 27). Whether Paul thinks that on the contrary the νόμος (τῶν) ἔργων provokes such boasting, is another question.

<sup>580</sup> On an overview of the various positions, see, e.g., H. Räisänen 1979/1980, 95-101; A. Ito 2003, 237f.

<sup>581</sup> Cf., e.g., W.H.P. Hatch 1917, 59n.1; C.K. Barrett 1957, 83; O. Kuss 1963, 175f.; H. Schlier 1977, 116; H. Räisänen 1979/1980; 1983 (with references to Greek literature, 124-141); 1987, 50-52; E. Käsemann 1980, 95f.; E.P. Sanders 1985, 83; D. Zeller 1985, 92f.; S. Westerholm 1988, 122-130; 2004, 322-325; M. Winger 1992, 85; J.A. Fitzmyer 1993, 131; D.J. Moo 1996, 247-250; K. Haacker 1999, 93 with n.56. See further A. Ito 2003, 238n.4 and RSV.

<sup>582</sup> Cf., e.g., G. Friedrich 1954; E. Lohse 1973; 2003, 137; C.E.B. Cranfield 1975, 220; U. Wilckens 1978, 245; C.T. Rhyne 1981, 63-71; J.D.G. Dunn 1988, 185-187; M. Neubrand 1997, 131; T.R. Schreiner 1998, 200-205; R. Bergmeier 2000, 49. See further references in A. Ito 2003, 237f. notes 2 and 3.

<sup>583</sup> H. Lietzmann 1928, 52 ("stilistische[r] Parallelismus"); J. Lambrecht 1985, 27n.1. – It is unlikely, though, that Paul carries out such a distinction and that he assumes his addressees would comprehend it.

Pauline argumentative flow.”<sup>584</sup> His own explanation combines the two levels of meaning, presupposing that they have to be complementary and compatible.<sup>585</sup>

Two issues have to be reflected: First, occasionally Paul does speak of νόμος in a figurative sense (e.g., Rom 7:21), but in the majority of passages νόμος denotes the Mosaic law, the Pentateuch, or the Old Testament as a whole.<sup>586</sup> The latter meanings all converge in their orientation towards the revealed divine will for mankind, and this salvation-historical perspective, i.e., the role and function of the law in God’s history governs the section 3:27-31. Second, is it conceivable that Paul’s audience could or was expected to distinguish *ad hoc* on first hearing or reading different semantic categories and identify them as a complex play on words and in a second step integrate the statements into the whole of Paul’s theology?<sup>587</sup> Would they not at first deduce the meaning from the immediate context,<sup>588</sup> where the reference of νόμος is to the salvation-historical dimension of the law<sup>589</sup>, which now appears in a completely different light upon the revelation of God in Christ and upon the resultant contrast to the now revealed faith-righteousness?

Probably it is, *inter alia*, again the complex Greek genitive that provokes the confusion. Since God’s act in Christ, since the advent of πίστις Χριστοῦ the law is radically re-evaluated: The purpose of the law as παιδαγωγός is to point the way to Christ (Gal 3:24-25), and therefore Christ is also its τέλος (Rom 10:4), insofar as it now lost its function as law for the one who believes.<sup>590</sup> Therefore, Paul’s answer to the implicit question “why is boasting excluded?” reads: Not by that (perspective on the<sup>591</sup>)

<sup>584</sup> A. Ito 2003, 239f. (quote: 240).

<sup>585</sup> Ito concludes that νόμος (τῶν) ἔργων means “the law of works demanded in that part of the Torah concerning (the) works,” while νόμος πίστεως refers to “the law of faith described in that part of the Torah concerning Abraham’s faith.” Thereby, he determines the genitive as “partitive” genitive, but concedes that “the paraphrases overstep the scope of a normal usage of genitives” (2003, 257). In fact, this circumlocution places side by side the controversial solutions and connects them by means of the verbs “demanded” and “described” respectively.

<sup>586</sup> Cf., e.g., P. Stuhlmacher 1997, 261f.

<sup>587</sup> Cf. H. Räisänen 1983, who titles his essay “Sprachliches zum Spiel des Paulus mit νόμος.” He concludes that Paul chose the word νόμος for the sake of a polemical-playful reference to the Mosaic law (117).

<sup>588</sup> Cf. U. Schnelle 2003, 353.

<sup>589</sup> By contrast, M. Winger takes the occurrences of νόμος in the immediate context to refer to the Torah (1992, 78-81).

<sup>590</sup> Cf. F. Vouga 1998, 89, on Gal 3:24-25.

<sup>591</sup> This translation is justified by the interrogative pronoun ποῖος, which asks for the quality or property of something. Against K. Haacker 1999, 93; M. Theobald 1999a, 182;

Paul's own biography is an example how God's act in Christ became reality in his life (Gal 2:12.16) and how this affected his perspective on the law (Phil 3:7-9). But in Romans 4 he appeals to the patriarch because he can deduce from the Abraham figure a general, typological function that possesses validity for both Jews and Gentiles.

A comparable thought occurs in Rom 9:31-32 with regard to Israel: "Israel pursues the Law of righteousness (νόμος δικαιοσύνης),<sup>597</sup> but has not arrived at the Law (νόμος). Why? Because [Israel has pursued it] on the basis of works, not of faith (οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως ἀλλ' ὡς ἐξ ἔργων)." By reason of our findings concerning 3:27, one could paraphrase Paul's implication: If Israel had taken the point of view of faith regarding the law, and not that of works, it would have arrived at the law and taken the perspective of righteousness on that law. Yet Israel seeks to establish its own righteousness (10:3, ἡ ἰδίᾳ δικαιοσύνη), just as Paul sought his own righteousness coming from the law (Phil 3:9, ἡ ἐμὴ δικαιοσύνη). Again, neither is Paul arguing against Israel's exclusive-national righteousness (e.g., E.P. Sanders), nor against Israel's legalistic self-righteousness (e.g., R. Bultmann), but against "the way in which it had pursued the law."<sup>598</sup> The revelation of God's righteousness in Christ, indeed Christ himself, is the "stumbling stone," over which Israel stumbled (Rom 9:32-33; cf. 3:21).<sup>599</sup> Since Christ, the law is replaced by faith as the way to justification (10:4).

Conversely, this perspective does not *eo ipso* attribute a negative connotation to καύχησις, νόμος (τῶν) ἔργων, or ἔργα νόμου, but poses radically the question of their value and function in the process of justification, now that the righteousness of God has been revealed through faith (3:22). A concrete or potential misunderstanding in the framework of these questions, i.e., the significance of the *sola fide* as foundation of salvation, appears to have triggered the Pauline exposition, which culminates in the general *dictum* 3:28: "For we come to the conclusion that a person is justified through faith (alone), apart from the works of the law."<sup>600</sup> The charac-

<sup>597</sup> Of course, even here, some regard νόμος to be metaphorical (cf., e.g., K. Haacker 1999, 199).

<sup>598</sup> C.E.B. Cranfield 1979, 509 (italics original).

<sup>599</sup> It appears that the commentaries do not sufficiently emphasize the new *era* that came about through faith. For instance, Cranfield's further comments (see previous note) imply that Israel could have assumed the perspective of faith even before Christ, in the era of the law. This is an impossibility in Paul's view due to the world's sinfulness apart from Christ (Rom 1:18-3:20).

<sup>600</sup> E. Käsemann calls 3:28 a "Lehrsatz" (1980, 97; cf. J. Lambrecht/R.W. Thompson 1988, 33: "general statement"). See also the study on Gal 2:16 and Rom 3:28 by M. Theobald (1999a). The character of a doctrinal statement does not imply that its content is accepted by all addressees (against M. Neubrand 1997, 137); what is undisputable and

it is contingent on the Christ-event. Therefore, it is too early to argue that the opposition of πίστις and ἔργα νόμου implicates that both denote “something on the human side of the salvation process.”<sup>607</sup> Here, faith is not the individual acceptance of the event of salvation, but part and criterion of the event of salvation, to which there is no alternative: *sola fide*.

Paul’s significant antithetical juxtaposition of πίστις [Χριστοῦ] and ἔργα νόμου,<sup>608</sup> but also his use of the term καύχησις leads us into the middle of the debate on the proper understanding of the “works of the law.”<sup>609</sup>

### b) Works of the Law

The phrase itself, ἔργα νόμου,<sup>610</sup> is a unique formulation, unknown to the Septuagint, the Apostolic Fathers, and the apologues.<sup>611</sup> Not least because of that, the question of its meaning has received the most different answers in Pauline scholarship and is still greatly disputed. Some basic positions need to be highlighted, since our understanding of πίστις is integrally related to the idea of “works of the law.” However, before immersing into the current discussion, we should take note of E. Lohmeyer’s suggestion

<sup>607</sup> J.D.G. Dunn 1997, 270.

<sup>608</sup> Gal 2:16 clarifies concisely the Pauline antithesis of ἔργα νόμου and πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. – Paul sometimes uses the abbreviation ἔργα/νόμος or πίστις when he has in mind the full phrase (in Romans: ἔργα: 4:2.6; 9:12; 11:6/νόμος: 10:4.5; cf. E. Lohmeyer 1929a, 64; E. Gräßer 1998, 13; πίστις: 1:17; 3:25.28.30.31; cf. H. Cremer 1900, 316; G. Friedrich 1982, 105).

<sup>609</sup> Generally, the discussion of the phrase ἔργα νόμου starts with Gal 2:16 where it appears three times. Apart from Gal 2:16, it occurs in Rom 3:20.28; Gal 3:2.5.10 (see also the *varia lectio* to Rom 9:32).

<sup>610</sup> Among the vast publications on the theme “works of the law” in Paul, reference could be made to U. Wilckens 1969; J. Blank 1969; D.J. Moo 1983; L. Gaston 1984; H. Hübner 1985; C.E.B. Cranfield 1991; J.D.G. Dunn 1992 etc.; T.R. Schreiner 1991; D. Flusser 1996; H.B.P. Mijoga 1999; J.C.R. de Roo 2000; R.K. Rapa 2001. Mijoga (4-57) and Rapa (15-51) offer an overview of scholarly positions.

<sup>611</sup> This is already stated by E. Lohmeyer, who of course could not know of 4QMMT yet. He calls the phrase “eine Besonderheit paulinischen Sprechens und Denkens” (1929a, 36). According to his own theory only the term מצוה is equivalent. Though this thought has never really been followed up – since מצוה is commonly regarded as equivalent to ἐντολαί –, one should nevertheless take into consideration that the Greek translation of Sir 44,20 has νόμος for מצוה (see above note 131 in chapter III). In light of Paul’s frequent use of νόμος as generic term for ἔργα νόμου (cf. Gal 2:21; 3:11; 5:4; Phil 3:6.9; Rom 10:4.5), one could gain a far broader textual basis for the interpretation of the Pauline ἔργα νόμου: Instead of fixating on 4QMMT (and 2Bar 57,2) as possible background of Paul’s phrase, one would have to at least consider occurrences of מצוה, presupposing that almost two centuries earlier, the translator of Sirach basically identified them. The inclusion of Old Testament and Qumran texts that combine a form of מצוה with תורה would also relieve 4QMMT from its burden of being the only parallel (see above pages 196-198 with note 263).

regarding the linguistic peculiarity of the expression: He argued that the kind of genitive in ἔργα νόμου correlates to its counter expression πίστις Χριστοῦ<sup>612</sup>. The genitive assumes three traits and denotes the origin or affiliation (subjective genitive),<sup>613</sup> the direction or goal (objective genitive), and the quality or characteristic (qualitative genitive).<sup>614</sup> It is correct to maintain that the theological antithesis between ἔργα νόμου and πίστις Χριστοῦ corresponds to a grammatical analogy. The genitive could also be called *genitivus relationis*,<sup>615</sup> as works *per definitionem* only exist in relation to the law, having their source, purpose, and content through the law.

The most radical position is taken by R. Bultmann, who states that in Paul's view we not only *cannot* achieve salvation through works of the law, but also *ought not*: Already the mere attempt to secure salvation through works is *eo ipso* sin,<sup>616</sup> because the meaning of the way of the law lies in its intention to lead to ἰδίᾳ δικαιοσύνη (Rom 10:3).<sup>617</sup> The reality of the status of the Jews is not an empirically or phenomenologically verifiable reality, but the exemplary reality of every human being.<sup>618</sup> In Protestant theology and – interestingly – in Catholic theology as well, this understanding enjoyed the status of a “mighty fortress” for a long time.<sup>619</sup> Hence, Paul's pessimism is grounded in his ontology: The power of sin is too forceful and comprehensive so that the will to obedience is unachievable.

Not all agree, however, with this “qualitative” understanding of the law, and the dissent has been increasing in the past decades.<sup>620</sup> According to U.

<sup>612</sup> See above page 262.

<sup>613</sup> Note here the idea of L. Gaston to regard ἔργα νόμου generally as subjective genitive in terms of “works which the law does”: causing guilt (Rom 3:19), revealing sin (3:20), etc. (1984). Yet it is not only QMMT that rules out Gaston's one-sided interpretation (cf. J.C.R. de Roo 2000, 117 with n.5).

<sup>614</sup> Cf. E. Lohmeyer 1929a, 73.

<sup>615</sup> See above pages 263 and 277.

<sup>616</sup> Cf. R. Bultmann 1958, 264f.

<sup>617</sup> Cf. R. Bultmann 1958, 268: Not the transgression of the law makes the way of the law wrong, but the direction of this way itself.

<sup>618</sup> Cf. E. Lohmeyer 1930, 110n.1 (“*sub specie apostoli* Inbegriff des Menschen, wie er ist”); G. Eichholz 1972, 63f.; E. Käsemann 1980, 82 (“der Jude als Typ des homo religiosus”); H.-J. Eckstein 2000, 9.

<sup>619</sup> This is how E. Gräßer puts it (1998, 4; cf. 8f.; Gräßer adopts Bultmann's position and terminology, 15). Among Catholic scholars, he refers to J. Blank 1969; K. Kertelge 1971; H. Schlier 1978 (especially 88f.); J. Gnllka 1994 (especially 70n.67). See further, agreeing with Bultmann, E.D. Burton 1921, 120; F. Hahn 1976, 36; H.D. Betz 1979, 146; E. Käsemann 1980, 83f.; G. Klein 1984.

<sup>620</sup> Cf. again E. Gräßer 1998, 4, who locates the main shift towards the end of the 1970s, though with U. Wilckens (1969) it certainly had an earlier representative. Gräßer also names background and reasons for this shift: a renewed understanding of the history-of-religions data, increasing in intensity in the course of “post-Holocaust” theology. Cf.

ments had a central role in marking Israel off from the surrounding nations.”<sup>626</sup> As such, the antithesis between *πίστις* and *ἔργα νόμου* derives from Paul’s agitation against an understanding of the Torah as granting national-exclusive privileges,<sup>627</sup> i.e., as corroborating a separation from the Gentiles. With different nuances, this reductionist “new perspective” – which actually has an old predecessor in Pelagius<sup>628</sup> – has almost become commonplace in (Anglo-Saxon<sup>629</sup>) exegesis.<sup>630</sup>

Above, some structural analogies have been mentioned between faith, sin, and the law, which should be taken up again and developed.<sup>631</sup> Just as faith and sin have the two basic dimensions of being super-individual phenomena, but also existential realities that become historical and tangible in the individual existence, Paul’s idea of the law, too, contains the notion of these two poles: The law is an salvation-historical entity, manifested by God, and it carries within itself the call for “works of the law,” which all,

<sup>626</sup> J.D.G. Dunn 1985, 217.

<sup>627</sup> With regard to the use of *מעשי התורה* in 4QMMT Dunn contends that “we need simply transpose the attitude expressed in the Qumran use of *מעשי התורה* from an internal Jewish dispute regarding particular halakhic rulings to one where the boundary ran between Jew and Gentile to find ourselves with *ἔργα νόμου* focusing on circumcision in particular” (1992, 104). Such a transposition is too “simple.”

<sup>628</sup> Cf. O. Hofius 1993, 159n.26, with reference to K.H. Schelkle 1956, 105, 113.

<sup>629</sup> See however, e.g., K. Haacker 1999, 83f.

<sup>630</sup> See with regard to Abraham’s “works”: F. Watson 1986, 137; M. Cranford 1995, 76f. Watson reduces the antithesis “faith – works” to a sociological level, stating that “faith in Christ is incompatible with works of the law because the church is separate from the synagogue” (1986, 47). With special reference to 4QMMT, M. Bachmann holds that the phrase *ἔργα νόμου* does not concern the actual doing of the law, but the instructions and prescriptions of the law themselves. “Paulus meint mit dem Ausdruck ‘Werke des Gesetzes’ nicht etwas, was auf der durch das Tun gemäß den Regelungen des Gesetzes markierten Ebene liegt, insbesondere nicht: Gebotserfüllungen, sondern er meint mit dem Syntagma ‘Werke des Gesetzes’ die Regelungen des Gesetzes selber” (M. Bachmann 1993, 29). J.D.G. Dunn responds that this interpretation seems to be “driving a wedge between two meanings ... which is quite unjustified” (2002, 281; cf. 2001, 367n.15; C. Burchard 1996, 410n.32; see yet again M. Bachmann 2005). Content of the law and conduct in accordance with the law belong together (see already E. Lohmeyer 1929a, 41: The Pauline concept *ἔργα νόμου* “faßt den doppelten Gedanken der Norm wie der Normerfüllung in einem Worte zusammen”). – M. Abegg argues on grounds of the parallel between Paul and Qumran that Paul reacts polemically against the sectarian attitude and theology of the Essenes (1994), but this interpretation neglects the general character of his argument against *ἔργα νόμου*, especially in Romans. Furthermore, one can hardly assert that the phrase is typically Essenic considering the one single occurrence in all of Qumran literature. – An extensive discussion of the traditional and new perspective is provided in S. Westerholm 2004, 3-258 (see especially “A Portrait of the ‘Lutheran’ Paul” [88-97] and “The Quotable Anti-‘Lutheran’ Paul” [249-258]).

<sup>631</sup> See above pages 252f. and 291f.



Jews and Gentiles, have to fulfill.<sup>632</sup> Thus, to follow Lohmeyer, works originate from the law, are directed to the law, and characterize the law.<sup>633</sup> But the law is not a timeless, autonomous norm.<sup>634</sup> God sent Christ (Gal 4:4), the τέλος of the law (Rom 10:4); and together with Christ came faith, the "new" salvation-historical manifestation that contains the claim of faith, that *all* believe.<sup>635</sup> It is indispensable to account for "Paul's assumption that the coming of Christ marked an eschatological division of time. If there was indeed a new ... phase of God's purpose, then the role of the law in relation to Israel belonged to the old phase."<sup>636</sup> On this new time and claim of faith Paul focuses in 3:28.

There, the phrase "works of the law" does not mean (the attempt of) the concrete, historical realization of the requirements of the law, but the wrong way of salvation, a futile ground of existence, the criterion of the participation in the sphere of the law, the τέλος of which is Christ. Yet justification does not happen on grounds of the "works of the law," but only apart from the "works of the law,"<sup>637</sup> i.e., through faith – through faith alone.<sup>638</sup> Paul does not link "works" or "faith" with a personal pronoun, binding both to time and space, but generically with every human being (ἄνθρωπος). Hence, in this verse he is not focusing on contesting the human attempt to secure salvation through the law (R. Bultmann), nor on the failure of fulfilling it (U. Wilckens), nor on certain ritual regulations (J.D.G. Dunn), but on the fundamental incompatibility of "works of the law" with God's will now revealed in and through πίστις Χριστοῦ. Again, the perspective Paul has obtained once and for all is the perspective of faith, which cannot from a neutral standpoint weigh objectively two alternatives, but which identifies the side opposite to faith with hopeless sinfulness (1:18-3:20).

But why and to what extent does Paul link the (works of the) law with sin<sup>639</sup>? Both are "in the world" (Rom 5:13), both are a trans-subjective,

<sup>632</sup> As for the Gentiles, cf. Rom 2:14.

<sup>633</sup> Cf. also A. Schlatter 1927, 335.

<sup>634</sup> Cf. E. Lohmeyer 1929a, 70.

<sup>635</sup> Cf. Rom 1:16; 3:22; 4:11; 10:4.11.

<sup>636</sup> J.D.G. Dunn 1998, 145. Cf. E. Käsemann 1980, 178: "Die Angriffsspitze der paulinischen Rechtfertigungslehre liegt darin, daß sie mit Sünde und Tod auch das Gesetz dem alten Äon zurechnet."

<sup>637</sup> The phrase ἔργα νόμου is always connected with either ἐκ (Rom 3:20; Gal 2:16[ter]; 3:2.5) or χωρίς (Rom 3:28).

<sup>638</sup> Cf. K. Berger 1966, 66: "Der Glaube ist daher nicht nur als ein anderer Weg als der der Werke, sondern auch der wahre Ausweg aus der dort erreichten Aussichtslosigkeit." See also L. Thuren 2000, 177: "God is said to have chosen another, exclusive way to salvation, in order to prevent such boasting." However, the reason for faith is rather "Aussichtslosigkeit" than the prevention of boasting. See also Gal 2:21.

<sup>639</sup> Cf. Rom 3:20; 5:13.20; 7:7-25; 8:2; 1Cor 15:56; Gal 3:22.

cosmic reality, “under” the power and dominion of which existence takes place.<sup>640</sup> Both drive towards a historical concretization of their power in terms of “works of the law” and “sinful deeds.” Both stand in sharp antithesis to faith. But: They themselves are contradictorily antithetical (7:7)! The law is “holy,” whereas sin becomes “sinful beyond measure” (7:12-13).

The most precise statement on the relationship between law and sin Paul gives in Rom 5:12-14<sup>641</sup>: Since the coming of the law, sin is counted (ἐλλογεῖσθαι) by God to the sinner, i.e., *a deo ad hominem* (5:13)<sup>642</sup>; also, since the coming of the law, there is knowledge of sin (3:20; cf. 7:7). Yet even before the law, sin has been qualified in negatively eschatological terms<sup>643</sup> – Adam being a “pre-existent” sinner, the forefather of humankind, who received the judgment of condemnation and death “proleptically” and lost the glory of eternal life intended for him (3:23).<sup>644</sup> In analogy, when Christ came faith came, and from that time onwards, faith is counted (λογίζεσθαι) by God to the believer (4:3), i.e., also *a deo ad hominem*. But even before Christ, faith has had positive, eschatological consequences<sup>645</sup> in a “proleptic” way and Abraham is the “pre-existent” believer, the forefather of all believers, whose acceptance by God led to righteousness and life in eternal glory (5:1-2). This means, both the law and faith – both in terms of their function in God’s history with the world – pronounce and

<sup>640</sup> Paul knows the expression to be “under sin” (Gal 3:22; Rom 3:9; 7:14), as well as to be “under the law” (Rom 6:14-15; 1Cor 9:20; Gal 3:23; 4:4-5.21; 5:18; cf. Rom 2:12; 3:19; 4:16; Gal 3:25). J.D.G. Dunn’s comments on the phrase ὑπὸ νόμον that “the law for Paul was indeed a kind of power” (1998, 141). This interpretation is “generally recognized” (H.-S. Choi 2005, 476n.54).

<sup>641</sup> To R. Bultmann this passage is partly unclear and unintelligible (1958, 252).

<sup>642</sup> On the meaning of ἐλλογεῖσθαι (cf. Phlm 18), see O. Hofius 1996, 92-96. He argues against the interpretation that regards Paul’s idea of “counting” as being dependent on the notion of the heavenly books (cf. prominently G. Friedrich 1952, 127f., but also, e.g., H. Schlier 1977, 164f.; U. Wilckens 1978, 319; E. Käsemann 1980, 141; J.D.G. Dunn 1988, 274), both on philological and theological grounds: The verb denotes “to charge a person with something” and not “to put on a person’s account” (cf. J.H. Moulton/G. Milligan 1930, 204); God is the implied subject, yet the act of “counting” does not happen in the heavenly world, but the sinner is the addressee, though not explicitly mentioned due to brachyology (cf. Phlm 18: ἐμοί; see also Rom 4:3: αὐτῷ).

<sup>643</sup> Hofius stresses that even before the law sin is qualified eschatologically (against E. Jüngel 1972, 158: “Ohne das Gesetz wird die Sünde nicht als Sünde eschatologisch zur Geltung gebracht”; cf. U. Wilckens 1978, 319f.).

<sup>644</sup> Sin prevented this intention from being realized. It is an act of sheer grace, therefore, if sin is *not* counted (cf. Rom 4:8).

<sup>645</sup> Cf. similarly K. Berger 1966, 70.